

LESKERNICK DIARY, 1998, - S. ADNITT

WEEK 1 - Sunday 24th to Thursday 28th May

Sun - Arrived on site & had a site tour. My first impressions of the site: an open, exposed, bleak place, a mass of stones, how will we ever tell what is natural & what is cultural? I can pick out walls on the lower slopes, but the huts are more difficult. There are many more stones around them, & you can suddenly find yourself standing in the middle of a circular hut, not noticing it until that moment! Slowly, through the day, it's easier to pick out patterns on the ground & on the brow of the hill as certain shaped stones are quite distinctive.

There is a contrast between Leskernick Hill itself & the 'ritual' landscape below. Leskernick - busy, confusing, disturbed & stony, & the 'ritual' valley, - calm, clean, clear, & undisturbed.

The surrounding landscape immediately becomes a source of reference to orientate myself, (as it seems hopeless to try & do so with the immediate surroundings & the stones).

Bram Willy dominates the landscape & the skyline, & this is the best & most obvious orientation point.

Other features that immediately stand out are the Beacon & Black rock (the Beacon: smooth, serene, almost protective of the ritual landscape below it) & Bram Willy in the distance (seems to be the furthest visible point in the landscape, Leskernick's outer limit.)

Mon - we start excavating the north stone circle.

A big problem is where to put the turf stack & spoil heap in order to be clear of any photos & to avoid damage by cows! Chris Tilley would like the spoil heap to be shaped like the Beacon. I like this

idea - it might stop us becoming engrossed in the trenches & force us to step & look at the landscape from time to time, but it has to be steep sided to stop cars trampling it so this is not to be!

Tues - Starting to travel down around the large stone in the centre of the 'stone circle'. First impressions are that it is not an earthfast boulder. The peat (post Bronze Age layer) goes right underneath it & is not very compacted.

Wed - Up in hut 39. The atmosphere up here is very different. It reflects the differences in the landscapes - down on the stone circle trench, it was quieter; calm & reflective. In the hut, it is busy, noisy (lots of clanging of travel on stone & chatter), & the trench is so much more confusing.

Chris Tilley is putting flags up along the stone row & there is an excellent view from here. It's very evocative, seeing the stone row emerge from the landscape, flag by flag. I can immediately feel its directionality & the emphasis on Bran Willy & beyond! Bran Willy must have been (well, still is!) a powerful feature in the landscape.

I walked along the stone row during tea break, & with the flags now all up, it's clear that the terminal stones must have been an impressive sight, as they end on the brow of the hill, with Bran Willy as their backdrop.

Thurs - A planning day. I planned the dehufted
field feature & started to plan one of the wall
sections on the far limits of the western settlement.
Flags are appearing all around the western
settlement, picking out (I believe!) distinctly shaped
and/or humanly placed boulders built into walls to see if any pattern, or
sense of direction emerges. Without knowing more
about the concepts behind the 'artwork' it is difficult
to understand, but it's making me look at the rocks
more, at their shapes, orientation & relationships with
each other.

WEEK 2, Saturday 30th to Thursday 4th June

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Sat - Planning the wall section & dehufting in hut 39. An
uneventful day.

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Sun - Off sick with a cold that's doing the rounds!

Mon - The stone wrapping has begun. There are red, yellow &
white stones everywhere. They are visually quite
stunning in their own right in this landscape - surreal
in that their bright colours are incongruous on the moor,
yet their forms & settings are so 'natural'.

Fantastic images, and they also draw attention to
features (circles, huts, repeated shapes in walls) that I
would not otherwise have noticed.

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Tues - It was very misty. The wrapped stones found another
use as beacons, guiding us around the hillside as
they loom out of the mist! My usual orientation

part, Brown Willy is shrouded in mist. Without him, I feel quite lost & isolated, & its comforting when the mist lifts & reveals him again!

We had a site far in the morning, and I spent the afternoon planning one of the wall junctions which actually looks just like a mass of stones - very difficult to pick out the cultural from the natural.

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Wed - I'm deciphering another wall junction. This one, thankfully, looks like a wall junction. We are trying to establish which of the 3 walls abuts the others, and we've been through all 3 possible alternatives already!

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Thurs - Cleared & prepared the wall junction for planning & photographing.

WEEK 3. Saturday 6th to Thursday 11th June

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Sat - I'm planning the field feature again. Its quite nice being on this side of the hill alone. Its very quiet. Sound travels on the south side of the hill where its more open. Here, on the west side, its ^{feels} more enclosed & people can creep up on you without a sound!

My feelings about Lestonick are very different from the first day here. Its no longer an exposed bleak landscape. The landscape is now so familiar, that it seems enclosed, protective, and on a more human scale. My eye is constantly drawn to Brown Willy now (instead of Brown Willy, who is still dominant, but a more familiar and

reissuing backdrop). Brown Gelly is the farthest visible point in the landscape, at least from the 'habitated' parts of the hill, and represents for me the limits of the 'known' or 'familiar' landscape. Everything beyond BG is unknown, so she is mysterious & appealing somehow.

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Sun- We had a tour of the trenches this morning. The soil profiles on the hill are becoming clearer now. The peat (post ^{post forming} Bronze Age), Pea gnt (Bronze Age) & the Rab (natural), being the usual profile. Understanding & recognising these gives a much greater sense of the time depth, the history & continuous use of the area.

Mon to - 3 days of battling against the elements. We were
Wed rained off site on Monday, & Tues & Wed were a battle
8/9/10 to work in the midst of howling gales. I became inward looking, concentrating on trying to keep string lines, planning boards & pencils steady, & keep wondering how cosy the stone huts with their thick, solid walls must have been! When we first arrived here, I remember feeling it was an open, exposed place, which in the present day, (relative to the landscape outside the moor,) it is. I imagine in the Bronze Age, it would have been less so, the surrounding hills being quite close & comforting, as opposed to the flat, open landscape outside the moor with its extensive views & lack of close, visual reference points in the landscape.

Thurs - A camera is being passed around for us each to take one photo that represents something of significance - place/view etc, for the anthropologists. I took a picture of a significant stone (the first one that was wrapped, which has a stunning form particularly when it is wrapped, & is in a picturesque setting) pointing at a significant point in the landscape (Brown Kelly, the point beyond which, the landscape is 'unknown'). It also represents the outer limits of the settlement, pointing to the outer limits of the world of Leskernick!

The sun came out late in the afternoon, & the light & views were beautiful. I noted over to take my own photo of my 'favourite' wrapped stone & all the wrapping was off, this & all the wrapped stones. I'll miss them dotted around the place, but on the other hand, it'll mean I'll have to locate my own 'significant' stones now.

WEEK 4 Saturday 13th to Thursday 18th June

Sat - I'm planning the 3rd boundary section. It's very different from the others. There are no upright orthostats. There are thoughts that perhaps some walls may have initially been boundaries marked out on the ground, visual rather than physical, perhaps defining areas for crop rotation, & were built upon later.

Sun - I'm planning the field feature. I enjoy coming here. It's quiet & tranquil with its peaceful view down the Fowey valley & the

comforting presence of Brown Willy behind. (It's also a relief to plan in 'relatively' calm weather!) Most of the wrapped stones have gone (or rather been unwrapped) & much as I liked them just as visual images in the landscape, it feels calmer without them.

Mon- A beautiful day. The sunshine all day & hardly a cloud was to be seen. The landscape & the light is spectacular in these conditions, particularly Brown Willy, who is quite dramatic when the sun ^{+ clouds} create shadows on the ~~land~~ ^{or} ~~land~~ ^{or} movement across him. Many people's response to Lesternick, is 'why would anyone want to live up here?' & on days like this, you can see why!

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Tues to 17
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After a few days of sunshine & showers, I now must have experienced every sort of weather that Lesternick has to offer! It's beautiful in the sunshine, but more stimulating in bad weather - you can feel much more of the landscape in the wind & rain. I also feel more a part of the landscape because I've been here for some time & experienced ~~the~~ all its moods! As though, because we've taken the time & trouble to engage with the landscape by staying here, it's engaging with us & sharing us everything it's capable of!!
I don't think I've ever 'existed' in a remote landscape like this before. I've always 'passed through' & appreciated it as it appears at that moment. Having lived & experienced the landscape at Lesternick, I feel I deserve to 'belong' here now!

WEEKS - Saturday 20th to Thursday 26th June,

Very little to write this week due to sheer exhaustion & also a concentration on just getting things finished, drawn, photographed & backfilled in time. The pace is hotting up!

By Thursday, all the trenches have been backfilled & we're left with a little tidying & reurfing to do.

Reurfing feels very reverential, placing everything back as it was, but by turf, slowly & thoughtfully.

I'm said to be leaving Liskeam for the last time. I've come to know it so well, but I know I'll be back again!